

# Responsive Approaches in Small Wars: The Army and Marine Corps in the Philippines, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic

A Monograph

by

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## **Abstract**

Responsive Approaches in Small Wars: The Army and Marine Corps in the Philippines, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, by MAJ Timothy J Downing, US Army, 41 pages.

Whether dealing with post-war instability, revolutions, insurgencies, or development missions, the United States military has a long history of confronting hostile forces hidden among civilian populations. This monograph seeks to answer the question “What characteristics do successful military approaches share in stability operations?” This monograph shows that military leaders that addressed the sources of instability or set the conditions for another agent to address the sources of instability in a changing environment while maintaining focus on the mission objective were ultimately successful.

The monograph uses case studies from the US Army’s occupation of the Philippines (1902-1913), and the Marine Corps’ occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) and the Dominican Republic (1916-1924) to explore the various approaches used and identify characteristics that differentiated successful from unsuccessful approaches. During the Army’s occupation of the Philippines, Leonard Wood, Tasker Bliss, and John Pershing modified their strategies to defeat an insurgency and bring Moroland under the control of the Philippine government. The Marine Corps’ modified their approach numerous times during the occupation of Haiti, and eliminated a robust Caco rebellion. During the occupation of the Dominican Republic, the Marine Corps used several different approaches to enable a political settlement with the Caudillo leaders.

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## Introduction

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the United States pushed economic and diplomatic influence across the globe. Through the policies of Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Taft, and Woodrow Wilson, the American military played a vital role in pursuing national objectives. While the United States has abandoned many imperialistic efforts, the problem of developing a military strategy to pacify hostile forces while setting the conditions for lasting stability still exists. This paper compares the occupation of Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the Philippines, the resulting military strategies, and the aftermath to identify effective planning methodologies for pacification missions.

The US National Security Strategy states that the country will always pursue a position of enduring advantage for security and prosperity. This pursuit has brought the United States in conflict with other nation-states on numerous occasions. Genocide in Rwanda and the resulting Responsibility to Protect referendum adopted by the United Nations has added an additional source of potential pacification operations for the United States. These policies open the door for US military involvement in foreign civil wars, revolutions, and nation-building without guaranteeing achievable objectives. As a result, military leaders are required to develop a strategy that achieves pacification while contributing to the national objectives for the conflict.

While the US has accumulated experience in pacification and nation-building operations, existing doctrine does not capture the essential elements of successful campaign design for pacification operations. Current doctrine focuses on counterinsurgency operations but not the aspects of governance.

The three case studies demonstrate that it is very difficult to identify and address the root causes of instability, but military and political leaders that remain flexible and adjust their plans to meet the emerging challenges of the environment can still be successful.

Numerous books are available that discuss the Philippine War, but far fewer specifically discuss the Moro insurgency and US occupation. Andrew Birtle's book, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and*

*Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1940*, provides a thorough overview of how the military developed and evolved doctrine for various pacification operations and reviewed how that doctrine influenced actions in the Philippines and Haiti. Brian Linn's book, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War 1899-1902*, offers a thorough review of the Philippine War and US Army counterinsurgency operations. Donald Smythe's biography of General Pershing, *Guerilla Warrior*, describes Pershing's contributions to planning and executing operations in the Philippines. Two of the most comprehensive books are *Moroland* by Robert Fulton and *The Moro War* by James Arnold. Both books study the US occupation following the Philippine War and impacts on the local population.<sup>1</sup>

Far fewer books discuss the Haitian occupation. David Healy's book, *Gunboat Diplomacy in the Wilson Era*, reviews President Wilson's foreign policy in the occupation of Haiti. Keith Bickle's book, *Mars Learning the Marine Corps' Development of Small Wars Doctrine 1915-1940*, examines how the Marines developed and used doctrine in the Philippines, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. Hans Schmidt's book, *The United States Occupation of Haiti 1915-1934*, provides a thorough look at the Marines occupation of Haiti and the evolving strategy of pacification.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to Keith Bickle's book on the Marine occupation of the Dominican Republic, Stephen Fuller and Graham Cosman's book, *Marines in the Dominican Republic 1916-1924*, is a summary of the occupation consolidated from primary sources for the Marine History and Museums Division. David

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<sup>1</sup> James Arnold, *The Moro War: How America Battled a Muslim Insurgency in the Philippine Jungle 1902-1913* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011); Andrew Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1941* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 2004); Robert Fulton, *Moroland 1899-1906: America's First Attempt to Transform an Islamic Society* (Bend, OR: Tumalo Creek Press, 2007); Brian Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989); Donald Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior: The Early Life of John J. Pershing* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> Keith Bickel, *Mars Learning: The Marine Corps' Development of Small Wars Doctrine 1915-1940* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001); David Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy in the Wilson Era: The U.S. Navy in Haiti 1915-1916* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976); Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti 1915-1934* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

Bettez explored the career and impact of Major General Feland in the Dominican Republic in his book, *Kentucky Marine Major General Logan Feland and the making of the modern USMC*.<sup>3</sup>

This study analyzes historical cases in the Philippines (1899-1946), Haiti (1915-1934), and the Dominican Republic (1916-1924) to evaluate the specific strategies employed by the military. Each section will focus on a single case study and cover the likely causes for the instability leading up to US intervention, the national policy and military strategy for each country, any adjustments to the strategy in response to the situation, and an analysis of the overall approach.

The paper is organized in five sections. The introduction offered the problem, hypothesis, brief literature review, an explanation of the methodology, limitations of the study, and the organization of the paper. The methodology section will describe in detail the process used to test the proposed hypothesis. The literature review section will examine existing publications and their contribution to the topic. The case study section will review each operation in depth and provide the evidence for the findings. The conclusion summarizes the argument and offers suggestions for future research.

### Case Study – Philippines 1902-1913

As the United States and Spain worked to finalize the conditions of the Treaty of Paris, elements from the US Army and Navy occupied key locations around the Philippines. With the signing of the treaty, the United States gained the Philippines as a protectorate and began a relationship that would last through World War II. While the initial occupation proved uneventful, violence soon broke out and the United States began the two-year Philippine War. Following the war, the United States continued to battle guerrilla forces and maintained a military presence even after they handed all security operations to the Philippine government. The Americans experienced a Moro uprising in 1902 because of the preexisting

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<sup>3</sup> David Bettez, *Kentucky Marine: Major General Logan Feland and the Making of the Modern USMC* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2014); Stephen Fuller and Graham Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic 1916-1924* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1974).

tensions between the Moros and the Filipinos, American actions during the Philippine War, and shifting United States policy towards the Moros. The United States military strategy for the Philippines changed several times through the occupation and eventually was successful because BG Pershing developed and executed a plan that met American political objectives, addressed some of the sources of instability, and created the conditions for the Philippine government to address the remaining sources of instability. Earlier attempts at a military strategy struggled because they either failed to address the sources of instability or failed to meet US political objectives. Pershing succeeded because he recognized the changes in the environment, understood the political objectives, and adjusted his approach to stabilize the region.

Tension between the Moros and the Filipinos were the result of hundreds of years of interaction and conflict. The Philippines began as disparate tribes scattered among the islands centrally located between Indonesia and China. Rival tribes would often steal animals, property, and people to increase their strength.<sup>4</sup> Immigrants from the surrounding areas contributed to an ethnically diverse population. Dozens of dialects, religions, and cultures ensured each tribe remained isolated from its neighbors. As Arabic traders established routes through China and the surrounding areas, Islam replaced the Asian and Pagan religions in many communities. Islam first appeared in the southern most Philippine islands and spread north.<sup>5</sup> When the Spanish arrived in the early 1500s, Islam had replaced most the native religions. The Spanish claimed all the islands and introduced Catholicism to the northern tribes.<sup>6</sup>

The Spanish used Catholicism as a tool to subdue the local tribes and enforced many aspects Spanish culture on the local population. As Spanish moved south through the islands, they encountered

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<sup>4</sup> Ronald Dolan, ed., *Philippines: A Country Study*, 4th ed., Area Handbook Series (Washington DC: Federal Research Division, 1993), 4–6; Carl Crow, *America and the Philippines* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1914), 14–23.

<sup>5</sup> Dolan, *Philippines: A Country Study*, 4–5; Arnold, *The Moro War*, 1–4.

<sup>6</sup> Dolan, *Philippines: A Country Study*, 5–9.

the Islamic based tribes. The Spanish had fought against the Moors in Europe and northern Africa and soon referred to the Philippine based Islamic tribes as Moros. The Moros resisted occupation and fought the Spanish for the next three-hundred years.<sup>7</sup> The Moros viewed the advance of Catholicism and Spanish culture as an existential threat to their existence. The conflict finally ended when the Spanish and Moros signed the Treaty of 1878.<sup>8</sup> By this point, the Moros held Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago with the Spanish controlling everything to the north. With the treaty, the Spanish formalized their claim over all the Philippines. This helped bolster Spanish power in the eyes of other European powers. However, the treaty exaggerated Spanish power on the islands.<sup>9</sup>

Even before the Spanish – American War, instability in the Philippines had increased to a nearly unmanageable level for the Spanish. In Moroland, the sultan had started losing power among the other tribal leaders as they looked for opportunities to increase their own power.<sup>10</sup> Hostile Moros isolated the Spanish in remoted outposts, further reducing Spanish control in the islands.<sup>11</sup> Mounting hunger, disease, and poverty led to protests, political writings, and armed revolts.<sup>12</sup> In March 1897, Emilio Aguinaldo y Famy led the Katipunan, a Filipino nationalist organization, and conducted large scale attacks against the Spanish.<sup>13</sup> The Spanish defeated Aguinaldo, but only exacerbated the conditions that allowed him to consolidate power. Aguinaldo returned to the Philippines in May 1898 and formed the Philippine Revolutionary Government. With money and arms supplied by the United States, Aguinaldo formed an

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<sup>7</sup> Crow, *America and the Philippines*, 14–23; Fulton, *Moroland*, 27–45.

<sup>8</sup> Arnold, *The Moro War*, 8–10; Fulton, *Moroland*, 49–51.

<sup>9</sup> Fulton, *Moroland*, 50–51.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 50–57.

<sup>11</sup> Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War 1899-1902*, 4–7.

<sup>12</sup> Dolan, *Philippines: A Country Study*, 17–20; Brian Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 16–17.

<sup>13</sup> Dolan, *Philippines: A Country Study*, 20; Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902*, 17.

army to resist the Spanish.<sup>14</sup> However, Aguinaldo's vision of the future kept power in the hands of a few elites.<sup>15</sup> While deeply held Filipino beliefs reinforced the concept of a strict hierarchy with a few divinely selected community leaders maintaining power, Aguinaldo's policy probably contributed to his inability to gain widespread public support.

At the beginning of the Spanish – American War, the United States viewed the Philippines as a potential staging area for operations in the western Pacific. This initial goal promised economic opportunities for the country and was widely supported in Congress. However, as the war progressed, President William McKinley determined that seizing complete control of the Philippines was the best way to demonstrate the power of the United States and the vulnerability of Spain.<sup>16</sup> President McKinley wanted the military to occupy key locations around the Philippines and establish civil control, but failed to provide clear guidance to military leaders on the future of the Philippines. After the Treaty of Paris, McKinley urged military restraint when dealing with the Philippine Revolutionary Government rebels, but wanted the Philippines to recognize US sovereignty in the islands.<sup>17</sup>

When the US military occupied the positions relinquished by the Spanish, Major General Elwell Otis, commanding officer for the US Army in the Philippines, realized that the situation in the Philippines was far more complicated than he initially assessed. MG Otis relayed his initial concerns about the Philippine Revolutionary Government, but assumed he could easily defeat them in a military engagement.<sup>18</sup> Otis also realized that the character of the northern islands was significantly different than Moroland. Initially, Otis resisted relieving the Spanish in Moroland. Otis was short-handed on personnel

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<sup>14</sup> Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902*, 19–22.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 21–22.

<sup>16</sup> Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War 1899-1902*, 8–10.

<sup>17</sup> Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902*, 26–32.

<sup>18</sup> John Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krag: The United States Army in the Philippines 1898-1902* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), 24–31.

and assumed that the Spanish would maintain civil control until both countries signed the Treaty of Paris. When he could no longer delay, MG Otis sent Captain Edward Pratt and a small contingent to occupy a position on Jolo Island in the Sulu Archipelago. Captain Pratt was the first person to realize that the Spanish had not enforced the Treaty of 1878 in Moroland. With this new information, Otis tasked Pratt to prevent Moroland from contributing to the issues with the Philippine Revolutionary Government separatists. In July of 1899, MG John Bates assumed responsibility of Moroland.<sup>19</sup>

During the ensuing Philippine War, US forces developed the first approach to stabilizing the Moro region. Bates used the Treaty of 1878 as a guideline and created what would become the Bates Agreement. The Moros recognized American authority in exchange for the American's non-interference in local governance.<sup>20</sup> This initial strategy succeeded in preventing the Moros from participating in the Philippine War, but did nothing to address the conditions that would lead to the Moro uprising. Additionally, the Bates Agreement left the Americans with limited leverage to unify the Philippines under a single central government. As the Philippine War concluded, the Bates Agreement proved inadequate for the evolving situation.

As the military governor of the Moro district, Brigadier General Wood developed an approach that failed to completely suppress the growing Moro resistance, but set some conditions for future success. Wood devised the concept to mass US forces in a few locations around Moroland. The massed forces could then react to any Moro resistance in overwhelming force. In a letter to President Roosevelt dated August 3, 1903, Wood wrote "I think one clean-cut lesson will be quite sufficient for [the Moros], but it should be of such character as not to need a dozen fritting repetitions."<sup>21</sup> Wood maintained this attitude throughout his tenure as the commander of the Moro district. As soon as his tour of Moroland

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<sup>19</sup> Fulton, *Moroland*, 20–24.

<sup>20</sup> Arnold, *The Moro War*, 8–9; Fulton, *Moroland*, 53–65.

<sup>21</sup> Fulton, *Moroland*, 203.

was complete, Wood devised a campaign to demonstrate American power around Lake Lanao and to inform the datu of the new law that outlawed all forms of slavery. Even with the perceived attack on Islam and the obvious insult to their position as datu, the Moro leaders passively watched the Americans march by. Undeterred by the lack of confrontation, Wood planned another expedition to another part of Mindanao. Without any consideration to the weather, Wood began his second expedition in the height of the monsoon season. However, this futile attempt to draw hostile Moros into a fight also failed. Wood's campaign struggled through the mud and rain only to meet amused Moros waving American flags.<sup>22</sup> Wood refused to abandon the expedition and pushed further inland. Luckily, a letter arrived from Major Hugh Scott informing Wood of hostile Moros on Jolo Island. Wood halted the expedition and made for the coast. A few days later, Scott was surprised by the appearance of Wood and an expedition of nearly 1,300 soldiers with another 200 – 300 support personnel. The Second Sulu Expedition, initiated in response to two Moros shooting at an American post, resulted in 1000-1500 Moros killed.<sup>23</sup> Ironically, the two men Scott believed were responsible for the shooting escaped into the jungle. The Americans had one soldier killed during the campaign. Wood believed he had delivered his lesson, but continued violence and several subsequent large scale operations suggest otherwise.

Wood followed the Second Sulu Expedition with a transition to hard-war tactics and encouraged his subordinates to conduct patrols throughout Moroland to identify Moro resistance. Wood ordered the patrols to destroy food, equipment, and homes in areas supporting Moro resistance.<sup>24</sup> In certain areas, the commanders segregated women and children into camps to create zones free of non-combatants. Wood's tactics drew negative attention to the occupation of the Philippines and fueled political debates in the United States.<sup>25</sup> President Roosevelt and Philippine Governor William Taft agreed that Wood needed

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 229–31.

<sup>23</sup> Arnold, *The Moro War*, 99–103.

<sup>24</sup> Fulton, *Moroland*, 245–50.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 260–63.

more oversight and demanded that Wood notify them before any further military action. Wood met the new constraints by exaggerating the threats posed by the Moros and selectively informing the administration of the tactics employed. As the US Presidential election neared, Roosevelt ordered Wood to halt all expeditions unless deemed vital to the occupation.<sup>26</sup> Wood's final expedition proved to be the bloodiest. Before assuming the role as commander of military forces in the Philippines, Wood led the expedition that resulted in the Battle at Bud Dajo on Jolo Island. Later called the Battle of the Clouds, the expedition killed between 600 and 1500 Moros.<sup>27</sup> The Moro fighters used children as human shields and later reports suggest that approximately two thirds of the Moros killed were women and children. As more reports of the action reached reporters, initial public support turned to outrage.<sup>28</sup> Fortunately for Roosevelt, Taft, and Wood, an earthquake in San Francisco drew the public's attention away from the battle to the tragic death of Americans during the disaster.

Wood's rigid adherence to large campaigns failed to prevent continued Moro violence, but his flexible economic and educational developments throughout Moroland initiated the necessary changes for future success. Wood used his engineer assets to improve roads and marketplaces and created schools. While these roads were mainly around the ports, the increased mobility improved trade and sped the deployment of military forces through the area.

Wood believed that a single decisive victory over Moro resistance would bring lasting stability to the region. Initial Philippine resistance coalesced around Aguinaldo, but continued after Aguinaldo's capture. Wood assumed the Moros were loyal to the idea of a Moroland and only needed to shift their loyalties to the United States. However, the Moros had a history of being loyal to individual rulers and not a single government. Wood did not realize that several key factors prevented a single victory from

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 265–68.

<sup>27</sup> Arnold, *The Moro War*, 149–72; Fulton, *Moroland*, 317–39.

<sup>28</sup> Arnold, *The Moro War*, 169–77; Fulton, *Moroland*, 343–54.

translating to all Moroland. First, Moro tribes did not believe in equality between individuals or tribes. Moros believed that an American victory over a rival tribe only proved that the Americans were stronger than the defeated tribe, and not all Moro tribes. Second, Moros interpreted many American policies as an attack against Islam. The Moros had fought against the Spanish, Christian Filipinos, and Pagan Filipinos for hundreds of years. When the Americans outlawed slavery, and started collecting taxes, many Moro leaders compared Wood's expeditions to early Spanish conquests against the Moros.<sup>29</sup> Third, Wood's hard-war tactics forced many Moro communities to displace. Conflicts between tribes increased as Moros fought each other for supplies. Non-combatant casualties remained high because Moro fortresses were the only refuge following the destruction of a village. This all added to growing Moro resentment towards American presence in Moroland. Finally, Wood's policy to keep Americans massed at a few locations reduced interactions between the Moros and US forces. This only contributed to misinterpretation of American policies and continued resistance. However, Wood established some of the roads and schools that proved vital later in the occupation.

As promised, Roosevelt helped secure Wood's promotion and appointment to command the Department of the Philippines. Just prior to the Battle at Bud Dajo, Wood learned that Brigadier General Tasker Bliss would replace him as the commander of Moro province. Following the battle, Bliss assumed command and developed his strategy for Moroland. Bliss believed that a major change in posture was necessary to improve the security situation and bring the Moros closer to the United States. Bliss felt that social reform, infrastructure improvements, and more emphasis on the economy would change the Moros's situation to an extent that large scale resistance towards American occupation would end.<sup>30</sup>

The first change Bliss wanted to make was transition from a few concentrations of US troops, to small outposts throughout Moroland. Bliss predicted that increased interaction between the Americans

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<sup>29</sup> Fulton, *Moroland*, 264–67.

<sup>30</sup> Arnold, *The Moro War*, 181–82; Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags*, 288–89.

and the Moros would reduce tensions, and demonstrate the benefits of government. Bliss knew that the US forces in the Philippines had transitioned from fifty-three bases during the conventional fight to 413 bases during the counter-guerrilla fight. This earlier success coupled with Bliss's experience with Native American tribes solidified his resolve for the change. The second change was a shift towards policing actions. Bliss wanted to treat small scale violence as criminal actions dealt through the *datus* and local court system. To make this happen, Bliss relied on the Moro Scouts and Moro Constabulary to maintain security. Bliss felt that the increased presence and improved security situation would help extend the benefits of his social reforms through the rest of Moroland. Finally, Bliss wanted to improve economic and educational opportunities for the Moros. Bliss believed that economic prosperity would reduce Moro violence and bring the Moro people closer to the cultural norms of nineteenth century America.<sup>31</sup>

Early in his tenure, Bliss faced two significant threats to his proposed strategy. The first threat formed after several Moros murdered an American soldier. The Americans discovered the identity of the murderers, but were unable to secure the outlaws by using the local authorities. Bliss knew he could mount an expedition to catch the offenders, but did not want to revert to Wood's strategy of large military expeditions. In the end, Bliss decided that it was better to accept the murder of an American soldier instead of following the path to large scale conflicts. This decision angered the US soldiers, but allowed Bliss to maintain his original strategy. Bliss' second threat came in the form of Moro pirate named Jikiri. When the US Navy withdrew its forces from the Sulu Seas in 1907, Jikiri moved in to take advantage of the lax security. Jikiri made his first raids at the end of 1907 and grew to celebrity status by the beginning of 1908. Bliss followed his original plan by using the local *datus* and the Moro Constabulary to track the outlaw down. As Jikiri continued to evade authorities, Bliss recognized that Jikiri could unify discontent Moros against the Americans. Although Bliss maintained a strategy of using minimal force to eliminate

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<sup>31</sup> Arnold, *The Moro War*, 178–82, 207–9.

threats to security, he eventually formed a taskforce to capture Jikiri. The task force eventually cornered Jikiri with the help of two naval gunboats and killed the pirate in a short fight on July 2, 1909.<sup>32</sup>

While Bliss was able to follow his strategy, some questioned whether the Moros were actually pacified. In a letter to Hugh Scott, Eddy Shück, a translator working for the Americans, wrote, “When you were here and sent word to a chief to come, he would be there at the appointed hour, but now [five] letters would not bring him in, not because they want to fight but just because they know that they can do it without being punished.”<sup>33</sup> In a strategy that relied on local leader participation, Bliss failed to earn the obedience of the *datus*. Throughout his tenure, Bliss relied on the Constabulary and Scouts to maintain the peace, an effort that continued to cost Moro lives, but prevented a large-scale Moro revolt. and furthered his social agenda.

Eventually, Bliss earned a promotion and assumed command of the Division of the Philippines in December of 1908, but it would be nearly a year before newly promoted Major General Pershing assumed command of Moro province. When Pershing arrived in November 1909 he conducted an inspection tour of the region and met with the local *datus*. Pershing agreed with many of Bliss’s concepts and committed to maintaining small dispersed garrisons throughout Moroland and focus on further economic improvements. However, Pershing believed the security situation had regressed during Bliss’s absence and resumed policing efforts. As the security situation improved, local farmers began growing more crops around the American outposts. However, Pershing’s restraint fell under considerable criticism. In July 1911, Martin Egan wrote a scathing editorial in the *Manilla Times* describing how a Moro hacked Lieutenant Walter Rodney to death in front of his four-year-old daughter. Egan proposed that the Moros were a violent and savage people and complete disarmament would be the only way to pacify the region. While Pershing had only lost eight regular soldiers and one scout in two years, he lamented that his forces

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 182–87.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 205.

had to fight ten different Moro groups. Pershing agreed that disarmament would be the best policy for Moroland.<sup>34</sup>

In September 1911, Pershing implemented the disarmament policy, effectively outlawing Moros from possessing any firearms or edged weapons greater than fifteen inches long. This order directly conflicted with Moro cultural norms, specifically the idea that a bladed weapon represented Moro masculinity. Pershing understood the implications, but believed delaying the action would only encourage more violence. Pershing was able to disarm many Moro tribes, but met resistance in a few areas. The largest group of resistance occupied defensive positions on the island of Jolo. In a nearly identical situation as the one faced by Wood five years earlier, Pershing faced a group of roughly eight hundred Moros atop Bud Dajo. However, Pershing had no desire to inflict the huge number of noncombatant casualties that is associated with the first Battle of Bud Dajo. Pershing began by isolating the mountain and segregating the noncombatants. Pershing then used the local datu to convince most of the defenders to surrender. When Pershing finally ordered the attack, only six defenders remained on the mountain. At the conclusion of the campaign, Pershing only suffered three wounded and killed twelve Moros, a stark contrast to Wood's efforts.<sup>35</sup>

Eventually, Pershing disarmed a majority of Moroland, but faced one final hurdle. Datu Amil occupied an interior village on Jolo Island and refused to disarm. Pershing attempted multiple negotiations, but failed to convince Amil to surrender. With increasing political pressure from his superiors in Manila and Washington, Pershing devised a plan to subdue the resistance. Pershing planned and executed a deception operation that effectively surprised the defenders and segregated most the noncombatants from the defenders.<sup>36</sup> Pershing then isolated the defenders and began a deliberate

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 222–23; Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 163–65.

<sup>35</sup> Arnold, *The Moro War*, 224–26; Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 168–73.

<sup>36</sup> Arnold, *The Moro War*, 228–33; Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 166–74.

approach to defeat the remaining Moros. After five days of fighting, the Americans and Philippine Scouts defeated the remaining Moros on Bud Bagsak. This marked the final large military campaign for Pershing in the Philippines, but the disarmament policy continued to meet isolated resistance throughout the region.<sup>37</sup> Disarmament fell to the Constabulary, but the effect was visible across Moroland. Pershing reported, “Now that the barriers between the strong and the weak have been broken down, it is an easy matter to get information against Moro criminals.”<sup>38</sup> The Constabulary resumed the primary role of security for the area and Pershing prepared for the final phase of American occupation in the Philippines. In December 1913, Pershing left the Philippines and Frank Carpenter became the first civil governor of Moroland.

Pershing succeeded in pacifying the Moro resistance because he understood and addressed some of the sources of instability and enabled the Philippine government to address others. Pershing recognized that the Moro people did not identify with the Filipino population and that existing Moro norms were unacceptable to US policy makers. Pershing used his political guidance and forced Moro tribes to comply with the updated requirements. By disarming the population, Pershing placed the burden of security on Philippine security forces, law enforcement on the Philippine constabulary and judicial system, and reduced the capability of Moro tribes to revolt against the government. Unlike Wood's policy of hard-war tactics, Pershing sought to avoid conflict when possible and minimize unnecessary bloodshed.

For lasting stability, the Moro population had to accept Philippine governance. Wood's approach failed to legitimize Philippine or American security forces and proved too rigid to end Moro resistance, but he introduced changes in education, infrastructure, and the economy to improve conditions on the southern islands. Bliss refined and continued many of these development plans and emphasized the capability of Philippine security forces and the local judicial system. However, the existing Moro customs

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<sup>37</sup> Arnold, *The Moro War*, 240–43; Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior*, 171–74.

<sup>38</sup> Arnold, *The Moro War*, 242.

were politically unacceptable. Pershing avoided the mistakes of Wood while capitalizing on the advancements of Bliss to meet the emerging political goals of the United States. In each case, Wood, Bliss, and Pershing continued to evolve their approach to address the changing environment and set the conditions for success.

## Case Study – Haiti 1915-1934

Following the assassination of Haitian President Guillaume Sam, President Wilson committed a Marine force to occupy key locations around Haiti to secure American assets on the island. President Wilson wanted to stabilize the Haitian government and prevent any European power from establishing control on the island. However, Wilson and other government officials failed to anticipate the complete collapse of Haitian governmental functions or the popular uprising that resisted the US occupation. Haiti had experienced numerous revolutions and many Haitians relied on violent opposition to force governmental changes. Early attempts at a military strategy struggled because Admiral William Caperton and Colonel Littleton Waller misunderstood the sources of instability on the island and underestimated the enduring nature of the insurgency. Waller developed a strategy that achieved some level of success, but transitioned security responsibility to Haitian forces too quickly resulting in a resurgence of violence. The Marines succeeded in quelling the violence by defeating the insurgent forces, enabling the Haitian forces to maintain security, and enabling the Haitian government to address some of the sources of instability.

When the French secured an establishment on the Spanish controlled island of Hispaniola, Haiti and the Dominican Republic developed in drastically different directions. The Spanish had failed to exploit the economic potential of Hispaniola and a majority of the island remained undeveloped. The French continued to encroach on the island until the Treaty of Ryswich in 1697, when the French and Spanish formally recognized French holdings on the western portion of the island. The treaty allowed the French to focus on agricultural developments leading Haiti to eventually produce most the world's coffee

and a significant portion of the world's sugar. These agricultural developments brought wealth to the colonists in Haiti and the French government, but used slaves bought from Africa and surrounding islands. This dramatically changed the demographics and culture of the island inhabitants and laid the groundwork for nearly two centuries of turmoil.<sup>39</sup>

During the French colonial period, Haiti developed into three main social groups, a small elite group of white French colonists, a larger group of “mulattos” or free colonists with mixed racial heritage, and a huge slave population consisting mostly of Africans. Racism and the oppressive practices of slavery created the racial tensions between the three groups that shaped the next one-hundred years.<sup>40</sup> The French colonists passed laws to restrict the mulattos from participating fully in colonial life, but allowed mulattos to own land and loan money. As a result, the mulattos amassed land and money and created a second tier of elites on the island, only widening the divide between the three groups.<sup>41</sup>

Between 1796 and 1803, the three groups fought against each other to control the colony, until Jean-Jacques Dessalines, a former slave, seized power and declared Haitian independence on January 1, 1804. Dessalines established a dictatorship and slaughtered the remaining whites in Haiti. He then continued the plantation system and forced the former slave population to support the nation's agriculture. However, Dessalines alienated many influential mulattos and was eventually assassinated. A series of people assumed the role of Haiti's leader, but none stabilized the country.<sup>42</sup> The longest period of leadership came under General Jean-Pierre Boyer who ruled from 1818 to 1843. During his tenure, Boyer relied on foreign loans and soon had a large debt to the French and British that only grew with each predecessor. Boyer failed to bring prosperity and justice to the country and eventually fled. From 1843 to

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<sup>39</sup> Richard Haggerty, ed., *Dominican Republic and Haiti: Country Studies*, 2nd ed., Area Handbook Series (Washington DC: Federal Research Division, 1991), xvii–xix.

<sup>40</sup> Arthur Millspaugh, *Haiti Under American Control 1915-1930* (Boston, MA: World Peace Foundation, 1931), 5–9.

<sup>41</sup> Haggerty, *Dominican Republic and Haiti Country Studies*, 206–7.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 207–212; Millspaugh, *Haiti Under American Control 1915-1930*, 5–20.

1915 twenty-two different people became Haiti's leader with only one serving his entire term in office with most leaders killed or expelled following a revolution.<sup>43</sup>

The United States intervened in Haiti in 1915 in response to three events. By 1910, Germany had established a small colony in Haiti and assumed control of nearly eighty percent of Haiti's international commerce and key infrastructure in the country. Germany used its navy to intervene on behalf of German interests in Haiti twice and planned to establish a coaling station on the island. German involvement threatened US interests on the island and access to Panama. The second event occurred in 1912 when President Cincinnatus Leconte died in an explosion in the National Palace. This event resulted in five different contenders vying for the presidency over the next three years. Eventually, General Guillaume Sam took control in March of 1915. The final event occurred in July 1915 when Guillaume Sam executed one-hundred and sixty-seven political prisoners. An angry mob captured Guillaume Sam and ripped him to pieces, carrying his dismembered body through the streets. The United States used this final event as the justification to occupy Haiti and establish a military government.<sup>44</sup>

President Wilson had three immediate goals when he decided to commit US forces into Haiti in 1915. First, Wilson wanted to protect the customs houses and other American interests in Haiti. The country represented both a revenue flow and market for expanding American companies. Second, Wilson needed to prevent France, Germany, or any other European power from seizing the tiny nation. Expanded European influence in the Caribbean threatened the physical and economic security of the United States as well as prevented free access to the Panama Canal.<sup>45</sup> Finally, Wilson wanted to stabilize the Haitian

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<sup>43</sup> Wilfrid Callcott, *The Caribbean Policy of the United States 1890-1920* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), 404-5; Millspaugh, *Haiti Under American Control 1915-1930*, 12.

<sup>44</sup> Lester Langley, *The United States and the Caribbean 1900-1970* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 71-73.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-72.

government to cement the relationship between Haiti and the United States and prevent future threats to American interests.

Admiral William Caperton, commander of the Cruiser Force of the Atlantic Fleet, achieved the first two goals almost immediately. Caperton's forces secured key locations and began building combat power ashore to prevent displacement from Haitian resistance or a European power. Caperton's initial success was due to several critical factors. First, the Navy had published a plan for the invasion of Haiti in the event of government collapse nine months before the actual events. The plan accounted for the Haitian military and hostile civilians and provided clear guidance, to include objectives and intent, for the landing force and supporting naval fleet.<sup>46</sup> Caperton and his subordinates could train and execute off this plan with little modification. Additionally, the Navy had intervened in Haiti on several occasions between 1901 and 1914, and the Navy maintained a naval presence in the Caribbean.<sup>47</sup> This resulted in rapid employment of Caperton's forces following Guillaume Sam's murder. These two factors allowed Caperton to focus his effort on approved objectives and meet President Wilson's intent before France or Germany had the opportunity to capitalize on the instability. Finally, neither the Haitian military nor the Caco rebels were equipped, motivated, or positioned to challenge Caperton. However, Caperton's initial force of three hundred Marines could only achieve an initial foothold into the country. Over the next month, the Navy brought in Colonel Littleton Waller and an additional two thousand Marines to expand their control and attempt to stabilize the Haitian government.

As Waller came into Haiti, Caperton was working to stabilize the Haitian government. In conjunction with the US State Department, Caperton took control of the Haitian parliament and organized an election for a new president. Up to this point, Caperton had worked with the "revolutionary committee" that assumed control of the government, but viewed them and the leading presidential

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<sup>46</sup> Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti 1915-1934*, 64–65.

<sup>47</sup> Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 30–31.

candidate, Dr. Rosalvo Bobo, as a threat to the stability of Haiti.<sup>48</sup> Caperton stopped the Haitian congress from electing Bobo and gave them an alternate candidate, Philippe Dartignuenave, to consider. The revolutionary committee attempted to dissolve the Haitian congress and prevent the election, but Caperton took control of the government, dissolved the revolutionary committee, and oversaw the election on August 12, 1915.<sup>49</sup> Philippe Dartignuenave signed a treaty a few weeks later that authorized US involvement in Haiti. At the same time, Caperton allowed Waller to declare martial law and establish a US military led government in Haiti. This began a troubled relationship between the military government and the Haitian President.

Col. Waller expanded Caperton's initial foothold by occupying portions of the larger cities in Haiti. As the Marines pushed further into Haiti, armed groups began attacking the Americans with more frequency. With support from Caperton, Waller responded to the threat with a plan to disarm the local population.<sup>50</sup> The Army had used a similar concept in the Philippines in an attempt to control the Moro population and prevent violent uprisings. Using that as a model, the military government offered money for weapons that the population voluntarily turned in, but met with limited success. In an effort to improve their success rate, the military government increased the payment for the weapons, but still failed to achieve wide participation. Following a second price increase, Waller and other government officials accepted that the program was not producing the desired results.<sup>51</sup>

Waller faced another hurdle to long term stability: an ineffective military and police force. Caperton, Waller, and other United States officials viewed the Haitian military and police force as ill-trained, ill-equipped, and ill-led. Waller responded by disbanding a majority of the military and police, instead electing to use Marines to fill the role. In December 1915, Caperton ordered Smedley Butler to

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>50</sup> Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 146–48.

<sup>51</sup> Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 70–71.

form and train the Gendarmerie, a militarized police force, to stabilize the country.<sup>52</sup> The Gendarmerie followed the format of the Philippine Scouts. US Marine officers and noncommissioned officers formed the leadership of the Gendarmerie and trained the Haitians to be the soldiers. The Gendarmerie held an advantage when compared to the Philippine Scouts. In the case of the Scouts, the members came from the Filipino population and were unfamiliar with the physical and cultural terrain of the Moro areas. Haitians in the Gendarmerie understood the land, language, and culture of their country. The Marines learned to use this knowledge to combat the hostile Cacos. By February 1916, Caperton and Waller were confident enough in the Gendarmerie to place them in the lead for most stability operations and kept the Marines in reserve.

During the initial stages of the occupation, Caperton worked with the State Department to reorganize the Haitian government. As Caperton created or consolidated departments, he would place a Navy or Marine officer to supervise the section. Some officers were qualified for the position and had cooperative Haitian counterparts to run the department. However, several officers found themselves unprepared for the role and many others could not find qualified Haitians to help run the sections. Many Haitians grew to resent and distrust the occupying Americans and despondent Haitian leaders used the turmoil to garner support.<sup>53</sup>

Initially, the Marines struggled to quell the violence due to a lack of understanding of the Caco threat, and an approach to operations that did not address the sources of instability. The Marines knew the Cacos had been a force at work in Haiti since Haitian independence, but did not understand why Cacos existed or how they consolidated their power. The Marines assumed Cacos were criminals taking advantage of instability and that they relied on the larger population centers to build their power. However, Cacos thrived outside of the population centers because those were the areas that the

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<sup>52</sup> Healy, *Gunboat Diplomacy*, 186–92.

<sup>53</sup> Emily Balch, ed., *Occupied Haiti* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 21–30; Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti 1915-1934*, 74–78.

established government could influence the least. This both explains why the Marines focused their intelligence collection and occupation on the population centers, and why the efforts were not successful. Additionally, Waller used an approach that did not address the sources of the instability. The existing Caco leaders were trying to maintain relevancy in Haitian society and drive the Marines off the island. The Marines used large columns in defensive patrols to protect the population centers from Caco influence. Not only were the Cacos able to attack the columns as often as desired, but they were also able to infiltrate into the cities to incite riots. Fortunately, Waller and his subordinate commanders were flexible enough to respond to the changing environment.

Waller came to realize that the Cacos thrived outside of the cities and that they were more vulnerable than initially believed. The Marines transitioned to an offensive approach to combat the Cacos and continued to evolve that approach until they successfully suppressed the first Caco threat. The Marines began occupying the outlying towns and conducting more reconnaissance patrols. The large and ineffective columns designed to find and destroy Caco forts shrunk in size and focused on finding Caco leadership and Caco support zones. Waller had used this search and destroy technique during the Philippine War and applied it to Haiti. While attacks on suspected support zones enabled Caco recruiting efforts, successful attacks against Caco leadership fragmented the groups. Improved mobility and intelligence proved essential for these successful missions.

Waller emphasized road construction and communication network improvement to support the Marines' efforts. The new roads allowed the Marines and the Gendarmerie to reposition their forces more rapidly across the country. Also, the roads connected more of the population to the major cities and the central government. Road construction offered local employment and merchants and farmers could move their goods more easily.<sup>54</sup> Waller also initiated improvements to the telegraph, telephone, and electrical networks. These networks began in the major cities and spread out to connect to the surrounding villages.

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<sup>54</sup> Balch, *Occupied Haiti*, 109–12.

The Marines used these improvements to relay intelligence and mission orders to outposts and active patrols. In the end, the improvements helped the Marines and Gendarmerie maneuver more effectively and brought efficiency gains to the local economy.

By the summer of 1916, the Marines and the Gendarmerie had established outposts throughout Haiti and largely eliminated active Caco resistance. Caperton left Haiti and turned command over to Waller. Waller, believing he had defeated the Cacos, placed Chesty Puller and the Gendarmerie in the lead for all policing and stability tasks and pulled the Marines back into their garrisons in the city. For many Haitians, this was a time of peace and rebuilding, but Waller had underestimated the Caco threat. As the Marines withdrew, Charlemagne Perault and Benoit Batrville emerged as the new Caco leaders and began escalating the violence.<sup>55</sup>

The Marines began their second campaign against the Cacos in 1918 by using the successful techniques from the 1916 campaign with two immediate adjustments. The first was a shift in focus from finding and targeting Caco leaders to finding and targeting the Caco bands. This reduced the number of fighters and weapons available for Caco leaders to use in the future. The second adjustment came with the use of planes for resupply, reconnaissance, and occasional close air support. Aerial resupply allowed the Marines and the Gendarmerie to maneuver further into the jungles and remain active for longer periods of time. Aerial reconnaissance allowed the Marines and Gendarmerie to identify Caco camps and strongholds more quickly. Close air support allowed the Marines and Gendarmerie to suppress the Cacos in some of the most difficult terrain. The Marines finally defeated Charlemagne's band during a large-scale Caco attack on Port-au-Prince in October 1919. During the attack, a Marine patrol disguised themselves as Cacos and snuck into Charlemagne's headquarters and killed the Caco leader. Batrville assumed control of the rebellion and made a second failed attack on the capitol a few months later.

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<sup>55</sup> Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 72–73; James McCrocklin, *Garde D'Haiti: Twenty Years of Organization and Training* (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1956), 103–15.

Finally, in April 1920, a Marine patrol located Batrville and killed him in his jungle headquarters. With Batrville's death, the Marines ended their second campaign against the Cacos.<sup>56</sup>

From 1920 until the end of the occupation in 1934, the Americans made two key changes to the military's role in Haiti. The first change was the transfer of security responsibilities from the Marines to the Gendarmerie.<sup>57</sup> Unlike the transition in 1916, the Marines began a slow withdrawal from outposts in 1920 until they finally consolidated in their main garrison in Port-au-Prince and Cape Hatien in 1926.<sup>58</sup> Another change was the overall responsibility of the theater. While the State Department was nominally in charge during the entire occupation, Caperton and Waller had declared Martial Law and controlled virtually all aspects of the occupation beginning in 1915. Following increased political pressure and a Congressional inquiry, President Wilson again placed the State Department in charge of overseeing the occupation.<sup>59</sup> From that point forward, the Marines played a smaller role in the occupation and American military officers filled fewer positions in the Haitian government.

Caperton and Waller developed their initial strategy on three key assumptions. The first assumption was that the population centers were the source of power and influence for the Caco leaders. By occupying the cities, the Marines would stem the flow of supplies and personnel to the Caco bands and limit the Cacos capacity for resistance. The Marines based their intelligence network on this assumption and focused on creating informants inside the cities. The Marines also assumed the Caco bands would be forced to confront the Marines in the cities because a successful Marine occupation of the cities was a psychological blow to the Caco movement. As a result, the Marines focused their initial

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<sup>56</sup> Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 73; Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 173–75.

<sup>57</sup> McCrocklin, *Garde D'Haiti*, 120–22.

<sup>58</sup> Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 90.

<sup>59</sup> Balch, *Occupied Haiti*, 122–27; Bruce Calder, *The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic during the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1984), 132; Millspaugh, *Haiti Under American Control 1915-1930*, 95–98.

efforts on conducting large defensive patrols in the immediate area surrounding the cities. However, both assumptions were incorrect. The Cacos had historically occupied that outlying areas and represented groups that the central government did not adequately support. While most of the previous Haitian presidents had relied on Caco bands to help them reach power, most of the presidents severed ties with Cacos and relied instead on the police and Army. While control of the population centers undoubtedly reduced the Cacos's ability to extract resources, the Marines did not achieve the decisive effects they originally imagined.

The Marines also assumed that the Cacos were nothing more than common criminals that thrived off domestic instability, and as such, were isolated from the larger population. When the occupation of the cities did not have the desired effects, the Marines used this assumption to attack support zones further to the interior of the country. This assumption was partially correct, but does not capture the complexity of the relationship between the Caco bands on the larger population. While many Caco leaders and Caco members were common criminals that thrived off the suffering of the larger Haitian population, the Cacos had survived because they appealed to marginalized Haitian populations and provided services that the central Haitian government was either unable or unwilling to provide. However, the Caco bands would also resort to acts of terror to force compliance from uncooperative Haitians. When the Marines began their campaign of destruction on the suspected Caco support areas, they effectively removed some of the Cacos's resources, but further isolated many Haitians. This helped create the conditions for the Cacos to continue to recruit new members throughout the occupation.

The final assumption revolved around the nature of the Caco leaders and the Caco insurgency. Caperton and Waller assumed that the Caco bands were fragile and would disintegrate if the Caco leader was killed or captured. Waller did not have the manpower or intelligence picture to target the leadership initially, but transitioned his operations to focus more on finding the Caco leaders as the Gendarmerie became more capable and the number of Marines increased. This assumption proved to be accurate, and arguably, the most important aspect of the Marines operations. As the Marines killed each Caco leader,

subordinate leaders fought to assume control of the movement. In many cases, these leaders weakened the overall resistance movement by operating independently, effectively dividing their combat power. At no point during the Haitian occupation was a single leader able to unify all the potential resistance groups into a cohesive force to fight the Marines. Even during the initial campaign, Dr. Rosalvo Bobo relied on several Caco chiefs to support his political aspirations.

It was the Marines flexibility which allowed them to better understand the sources of instability and the environment to stabilize Haiti. By the time the Marines left Haiti, they had conducted two major campaigns against the Cacos and trained an effective Haitian military force, the Gendarmerie. While Caperton and Waller initially failed to understand the nature of the Caco threat, they adapted their approach and successfully ended open rebellion against the Haitian government. During their second campaign against the Cacos, the Marines applied the lessons learned from the first campaign, but stayed flexible enough to take advantage of the opportunities created by aviation assets. When the civil government resumed control of Haiti, the Marines had pacified the Cacos, but it would be up to the Haitian government to make the reforms necessary to address the economic and political conditions that created and sustained the Cacos.

### Case Study – Dominican Republic 1916-1924

By 1916, the Dominican government continued to accrue debt and struggled to exert control over the country. Rival political parties eroded the national government's power, and General Desiderio Arias threatened to seize control of the country. President Wilson believed a weakened Dominican government was vulnerable to European encroachment which threatened American security and economic interests. As such, Wilson committed a Marine force to support and protect the existing Dominican government. When President Juan Jiménez resigned, US objectives changed to include supporting national elections and improving governance. The objectives changed again when rebel groups began attacking the Marines and inciting violence across the country. Throughout the occupation, the Marines adjusted their approach

to defeat the rebel groups but had to settle for reconciliation. While the Marines achieved numerous tactical victories, rebel leaders maintained a strong public support base and continued violence forced the US State Department and the Dominican government to grant pardons to the rebels. However, the Marines' approach set the conditions for the Dominican government and Dominican security forces to marginalize the rebels and establish a strong central government. Key to this success was the Marines willingness to evolve their approach in response to the changing environment.

When President Wilson committed United States forces to support the Dominican government, he was following a long trend of US involvement on the island. The United States' interest in the Dominican Republic began in earnest during the American Civil War. United States General William L. Cazneau believed in the economic potential of a relationship with the Dominican Republic and lobbied in Congress from 1853 to 1857 and again from 1861 to 1869 to establish formal ties but failed to garner enough support.<sup>60</sup> President Grant agreed with some aspects of General Cazneau's proposition and recommended to Congress that the United States should annex the Dominican Republic. However, anti-imperialist supporters fought the recommendation and gained enough support in Congress to defeat the measure.<sup>61</sup> Now the United States looked towards its Caribbean neighbor as a vulnerability to American security and used diplomatic, economic, and military pressure to encourage stability in the Dominican Republic. The US State Department achieved a binding tie in 1891 with a Treaty of Reciprocity between the United States and Santo Domingo. The treaty guaranteed the United States an equitable arrangement to any treaty signed between Santo Domingo and another country giving the United States significant diplomatic and economic leverage over Santo Domingo. In 1893 in response to Santo Domingo's growing debt, the New York based company, San Domingo Improvement Company, assumed the role as customs collector and national bank for Santo Domingo.<sup>62</sup> This meant that the United States would collect all of the customs

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<sup>60</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 2.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.; Callcott, *The Caribbean Policy of the United States*, 37–38.

<sup>62</sup> Langley, *The United States and the Caribbean 1900-1970*, 27.

revenues for the Dominican Republic and both pay off the Dominican Republic's foreign debts and supply the remaining money for the Dominican Republic's budget.<sup>63</sup> Following the Venezuela Crisis of 1895, the United States asserted its responsibility to ensure Western Hemisphere governments continued to pay their debts to foreign powers. The first challenge to US holdings in the Dominican Republic came at the turn of the century when the Dominican president expelled the San Domingo Improvement Company from the customs houses. The United States entered into negotiations with the Dominican Republic and reached an agreement by 1903. However, a civil war threatened the Dominican government and the United States needed to intervene to stabilize the situation. The United States regained control of the Dominican customs houses in 1904 and appointed US officials to once again control revenue flow.

By the turn of the century, the United States took a more aggressive stance to Caribbean nations. In 1901 in his State of the Union speech, President Roosevelt said he could no longer guarantee territorial integrity for Latin American states that misbehaved or failed to pay their debts.<sup>64</sup> With a proposed canal project, President Roosevelt viewed any instability in the Caribbean as a threat to American economic and security interests. Elihu Root, US Secretary of War, argued in 1902 for military and political domination of all the nations along a route to the Panama Canal. However, US experiences in the Philippines at the time began tempering American ambition.<sup>65</sup>

The Dominican Republic had a long history of instability because of an engrained political structure that left the central government reliant on territorial leaders. This system sprang up when the Spanish initially colonized the island. Christopher Columbus established Santo Domingo on Hispaniola as an administrative center for the budding Spanish territories in North America, Central America, and the Caribbean, and did not exert much effort to exploit the natural resources of the island.<sup>66</sup> Subsequently, the

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>64</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 4–5.

<sup>65</sup> Langley, *The United States and the Caribbean 1900-1970*, 27–28.

<sup>66</sup> Haggerty, *Dominican Republic and Haiti Country Studies*, 203–5.

Spanish concentrated colonists in a few settlements across the island and did not establish the infrastructure necessary for reliable communications or mobility. Politically motivated Spaniards consolidated power and established control in small pockets across the island in what became the caudillo system that dominated Dominican politics and fueled the rebellion against the US occupation.

The focus on administration also had a dramatic effect on the demographics of the island. The plantation owners relied on slaves imported from Africa and surrounding islands, but at significantly smaller numbers than other colonies in the region. By 1790 the population of Santo Domingo consisted of 40,000 white, 25,000 free black or mulatto, and 60,000 slaves. As a comparison, the French colony of Saint-Domingue, present day Haiti, had 30,000 white, 27,000 free black or mulatto, and 500,000 slaves.<sup>67</sup> The small proportion of slaves ensured that the powerful elite had little to fear from the masses. Even after the abolition of slavery, the elite families controlled the political process.

One of the reasons the Marines struggled to pacify the rebels was their misunderstanding of the caudillo system. When Haiti invaded the Dominican Republic, it was the Caudillos that organized resistance groups and eventually expelled the Haitians in 1844. However, the Caudillo system left the central government weak and reliant on Caudillo support. From 1844 until 1865, General Pedro Santana and Buenaventura Báez fought bitterly to control the country and epitomized the caudillo system.<sup>68</sup>

Ulises Heureaux compounded the country's economic problems by leasing and selling key infrastructure to foreign investors and borrowing large sums of money from foreign powers. In 1893, the San Domingo Improvement Company, a New York based corporation, became the Santo Domingo's primary banker and customs collector to help decrease the Santo Domingo's foreign debt. However, when Ramón Cáceres Vásquez assassinated Heureaux in 1899, the Dominicans were still crushed by debt.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 7–8.

<sup>68</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 1–3.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 3–5.

From 1899 to 1916, Santo Domingo returned to political turmoil and the emergence of a three-party political system. The caudillo system, which grew out of isolated plantations and led by members of the elite society, was manifest in political parties centered on individuals versus ideas. From 1899 to 1916, the Jimenistas, Horacistas, and Velasquistas were the political parties that fought to control the government. Because popular support was based on the leadership of the party, the Dominicans struggled to achieve any political compromise. When one of the parties secured key political positions, they brought as many supporters into power as possible. Inevitably, the public would reject the politicians in power and demand a change in leadership. The United States intervened diplomatically and economically several times during this period, but intervened militarily in 1912 following the assassination of President Ramón Cáceres Vásquez. After forcing the elected president to resign and installing Monsignor Adolfo Nouel as president, the US State Department leveraged the customs receivership and the threat of a military government to reform the Dominican Republic's political system and establish a free democracy. However, political pressure forced Nouel to resign in 1913 and General José Bordas Valdez won the election. The United States viewed Valdez as an autocrat and eventually forced his resignation. Finally, in December 1914, President Juan Jiménez became the newest elected president of the Dominican Republic. The US State Department used financial pressure to force continued reforms until the Dominican Republic hit a breaking point. Revolutionaries gathered in the countryside and threatened to seize control of several Dominican towns. President Jiménez had lost political influence and many of his military officers openly resisted his leadership. In April 1916, Jiménez lost control of the country. Supporters of General Desiderio Arias in the Dominican Congress moved to impeach Jiménez as General Arias seized the capital. The United States had to intervene militarily and protect the Jiménez presidency or allow General Arias to become the next president.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Ian Bell, *The Dominican Republic* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), 60–62; Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic 1916-1924*, 2–7.

The United States initially intervened to preserve key administrative infrastructure and present a military threat to the forces opposing Jiménez. While Jiménez asked the US Minister Russell for arms to fight the rebels, the United States used Marines to occupy key locations in Santo Domingo and Santiago, and naval vessels to secure the ports. Jiménez refused to be associated with the US occupation and resigned. As a result, the United States committed to a military occupation to ensure free elections. Rear Admiral Caperton, commander of the Cruiser Force of the Atlantic Fleet, offered Arias terms for a surrender, but Arias refused. In response, Captain Harry Knapp and Colonel Joseph Pendleton, commander for all ground forces in the Dominican Republic, organized an attack against Arias and drove Arias' forces into the countryside.<sup>71</sup>

Pendleton's advance into the country was a resounding success. The Marine column met, and brushed away, Arias' forces and secured the cities. Arias acknowledged the Marine victory and agreed to disarm his forces. Soon the Marines controlled key locations in the country and the US was positioned to ensure the Dominican Republic returned to peaceful democratic rule. Unfortunately, State Department policies and the Marines' actions ignited widespread public resentment and resistance that continued throughout the occupation. Unlike the Cacos in Haiti, the rebelling bands worked closely within the population and fought a political as well as a physical campaign of resistance.<sup>72</sup>

When Arias surrendered, Pendleton assumed he had eliminated the greatest threat to the Marine occupation. Unfortunately, the US plan of occupation and poor discipline in the Marine units led to an increasing level of public resentment and eventually open rebellion. Unlike in Haiti, President Wilson had

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<sup>71</sup> Jan Black, *The Dominican Republic: Politics and Development in an Unsovereign State* (Boston, MA: Allan and Unwin, 1986), 21–22; Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, 168–71.

<sup>72</sup> Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic 1916-1924*, 22–31; Valentina Peguero, *The Militarization of Culture in the Dominican Republic, From the Captains General to General Trujillo* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 30–33.

authorized Knapp to establish a military government and implement martial law.<sup>73</sup> Included in this military government was the power of Marines to arrest Dominicans and control the judiciary process. Not only were the Marines largely untrained for the task, but this alienated the educated Dominicans that formed the professional backbone of the country. The Caudillos once again became the predominant form of government throughout the country as the already weak central government melted away into a system controlled by the US military.

The military government had to contend with several different groups that sought to influence the Dominican population, US population, and international dialogue on the occupation. Domestically, the US administration faced opposition from anti-imperialist groups before and after World War I. Established political leaders that had existed in the Dominican Republic before and during the occupation formed the next group. When President Jiménez resigned, he and other political leaders traveled throughout the Caribbean, United States, and Europe arguing for an immediate end to the occupation. Political leaders in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere joined these voices to withdraw the Marines. The next group was the Dominican elite. These were influential businessmen that leveraged their relationships with foreign business and political leaders to influence US policy. In a related group, the owners of the sugar plantations attempted to use US banking connections to influence Marine policy. The bandits, as the Marines titled them, were a mixture of revolutionaries, insurgents, and criminals who led groups of desperate Dominicans against the Marines. Spread throughout all the groups were the Caudillos that had influenced Dominican politics and society for hundreds of years. As the occupation continued, the military government attempted to manage each of these groups to maintain the resources and authorities Knapp and his predecessors deemed necessary to accomplish their goals.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Callcott, *The Caribbean Policy of the United States*, 400–403.

<sup>74</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 16–19, 25–31; Sumner Welles, *Naboth's Vineyard: The Dominican Republic 1844-1924*, vol. 2 (New York: Payson and Clark, 1928), 788–803.

As rebellions sprung up across the country, Pendleton developed a campaign plan that looked similar to the initial plan used by the Marines in Haiti. Pendleton used the natural topography and historic social separation to divide the country into the Northern District and Southern District. Pendleton consolidated his forces in Santiago and Santo Domingo and focused on large formations conducting defensive patrols around the cities. The Marines stuck to these tactics for the next two years even though the tactics proved ineffective against the Caudillo backed resistance. Even more alarming is the fact that the Marines stationed in Haiti had already developed successful approaches used against Haitian insurgents, and two companies of Marines that had used those tactics in Haiti were stationed in the Dominican Republic. Additionally, Pendleton waited an entire year before creating the Guardia Nacional Dominicana, a Dominican force that replaced the military and the police, even though the Army and Marines had created similar forces in the Philippines, Cuba, and Haiti.<sup>75</sup>

The first major threat to the Marines developed in the eastern portions of the country in 1916 and continued into 1922. Large corporations had moved into these areas and driven out most the local agriculture. Instead of bringing increased efficiency for food production or a needed source of revenue for the community, the large plantations focused on sugar and other cash crops. Most the workers earned a meager pay, and the once powerful Caudillos were pushed towards the periphery. For many, the installation of an American led military government signaled that these United States backed corporations would continue to grow in importance. The marginalized Caudillos used their accumulated wealth and influence to equip and motivate a resistance movement. While the rebel bands used the mountainous terrain and limited infrastructure to establish safe havens to attack the Marines, the Caudillos used the Marines' actions to gain local support.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 111–12.

<sup>76</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 116–20.

During this period, the Marines implemented several programs to change the Dominican Republic. One of the first changes came to the Dominican education system. The military government sought to expand the current system and increase the availability of basic education to more Dominicans. This followed the pattern of a similar change made in the Philippines with the goal of creating a more educated worker base and more informed electorate. The Marines also set out to create a modern road network throughout the country to improve economic infrastructure and provide the Marines greater mobility throughout the country. However, the Marines discovered that an extensive survey of the entire country would be necessary to plan the roads. When Waller transferred from Haiti to the Dominican Republic, he placed these surveys and road construction as a priority, increasing the funds and personnel allocated for each task.<sup>77</sup>

In 1917, the Marines began to occupy more of the island and transition from larger formations to smaller formations conducting reconnaissance and offensive patrols. The Marines made this transition for tactical and strategic reasons. On the tactical level, the large patrols had failed to produce results against the bandits. The formations were cumbersome, easy to track, and easy to avoid. The smaller patrols covered more area and could react to intelligence on the enemy more quickly. On the strategic level, the Marine commanders and the military government realized that the bandit activity threatened US economic interests, overall Dominican economic stability, and the Dominican's perception of the power and ability of the central government. At the same time, Pendleton began utilizing the newly formed Guardia to supplement the limited number of Marines. The smaller patrols started influencing the bandits and attacks against the Marines dropped. The one exception were the Marines that landed at San Pedro de Macorís in January 1917.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 112–16.

<sup>78</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 133.

In August 1918, Brigadier General Ben Fuller replaced Pendleton as the Marine commander and once again modified the Marines approach to combat the bandits.<sup>79</sup> Later that month, Lt. Col. Thorpe, commander of the Marines in Macorís, issued orders to relocate Dominicans throughout the region into guarded camps allowing the Marines and Guardia to search the area for bandits. While the relocation only lasted for a month, the consequences were both immediate and lasting.<sup>80</sup> The affected Dominicans lost work, ate into their limited resources, and suffered property loss as the rebel bands raided unguarded homes and villages. During the Congressional investigation in 1921, officials reviewed this and a later relocation among a litany of alleged Marine and Guardia abuses. While the Marines arrested hundreds of bandit supporters, the military government realized they failed to capture a single leader or any of the active members.<sup>81</sup>

The year 1918 also marked a degradation of the relationship between the military government and the sugar plantation owners. Before the occupation, the plantation owners had relied on the Caudillos to maintain security for the plantations. During the occupation, the plantation owners had looked to the military government and the Marines to fill that role. By 1918, the bandits had shifted focus from harassing the Marines, to robbing the plantations and destroying the sugar crops. When the Marines were unable to protect the plantations, the owners looked towards their financial and political connections in the United States to influence the situation. When Rear Admiral Thomas Snowden became the Military Governor in February 1919, political pressure and increased rebel activity led Snowden to create the Eastern District and request additional Marines.<sup>82</sup>

After the creation of the Eastern District, the Marines and the military government made four significant adjustments to their approach against the bandits. With increasing pressure from the

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<sup>79</sup> Bettez, *Kentucky Marine*, 126.

<sup>80</sup> Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 147–52.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 151–55; Millspaugh, *Haiti Under American Control 1915-1930*, 70–71.

<sup>82</sup> Bettez, *Kentucky Marine*, 126–28; Welles, *Naboth's Vineyard*, 2:820–24.

Dominican elites and the sugar plantation owners, the military government authorized the arming of Dominicans to guard the plantations and vulnerable plantation centers. At first, the Marines demanded to have some Marine leadership present with each group, but relented after realizing the potential manpower cost necessary. While the guards may have slowed some of the rebels' progress, raids on the plantations and villages were commonplace into 1921. The second major adjustment came at the end of 1921 with the implementation of cordon and search operations. These operations involved multiple Marine companies working in concert to isolate suspected areas holding rebels and search the area for organized resistance groups. These operations delivered promising results with the Marines defeating several small bandit groups. The third adjustment was the creation of Dominican counter-guerrilla units. Local Dominican leaders had argued for these units, but many Marine leaders did not feel they were necessary. However, by the end of 1921, the military government realized the insurgency was still a significant concern for the population and could potentially continue for years to come. In conjunction with the counter-guerrilla units, the military government offered pardons for rebels that surrendered. This final adjustment came as politicians and military leaders accepted the notion that many of the bandits were in fact revolutionaries fighting for their country. The adjustments had the desired effect and organized rebellion ceased by the summer of 1922.<sup>83</sup>

While the Marines had quelled organized rebellion, the military government lost control to the US State Department. The political pressure caused by Dominican politicians, sugar plantation owners, and Dominican activists had forced the US administration to act. Domestic support no longer existed for the Dominican occupation and President Harding recognized he would have to withdraw the Marines. The US and the Dominican Republic reached the first agreement on the Marine withdrawal in 1921, and

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<sup>83</sup> Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 120–28; Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 172–78; Fuller and Cosmas, *Marines in the Dominican Republic 1916-1924*, 36–45.

the last Marines left by 1924. While the US maintained some influence in the Dominican Republic, the country was back in the hands of the Dominican politicians.<sup>84</sup>

The Marine occupation suffered from several setbacks. The initial landing force seized key terrain, assessed the environment, and eliminated the largest threat to the Dominican central government. However, the State Department and Caperton underestimated the complexities of Dominican politics. Jiménez knew he was vulnerable to political attacks if he supported US involvement and disliked the idea of increased US influence in the country. After Jiménez resigned, Caperton was left to lead the Dominican government. Even after the US organized elections and validated the occupation, the Dominican population resisted. Incidents of Marines disrespecting Dominican civilians only increased the resentment and the Caudillos reacted. Even with a misunderstanding of the enemy they faced, the Marines had the opportunity to use lessons learned in Haiti to combat the threat. Instead, the Marines implemented a strategy that had failed in neighboring Haiti.

After nearly two years without significant progress, the Marines made the fundamental changes necessary to address the insurgency. Unfortunately, the Marines still did not understand the motivations of their enemy, clinging to the idea they were simply criminals. The shift to smaller patrols and numerous outposts allowed the Marines to cover more of the country and shrink rebel sanctuaries. However, confrontations between the Marines and the population in the Eastern District further alienated the military government and allowed the rebels to maintain a robust zone of support.

The Marines were able to defeat the rebels in 1922 for four reasons. The Marines had learned to synchronize multiple companies on a single objective using intelligence, radios, and aviation support. This multiplied the combat effectiveness of the Marines and allowed them to achieve greater affects against the rebels. The Guardia had become a well-trained and well-equipped force able to operate

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<sup>84</sup> Black, *The Dominican Republic Politics and Develoment in an Unsovereign State*, 25; Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, 176–78; Calder, *The Impact of Intervention*, 208–12.

independently of Marine units. This allowed the military government to provide security to more areas of the country. The Marines allowed Dominicans to form and arm counter-guerrilla units. These units were comprised of Dominicans that had the skills necessary and motivation to find and defeat the rebels. The final step was the decision by the State Department and the military government to allow pardons for the rebels. This came after the US realized the Marines might not be able to militarily defeat the rebels and that the rebels were in fact fighting on behalf of their country. It may have been the pardons more than anything else that contributed to the end of the fighting.

## Conclusion

The United States has involved itself in many conflicts over its history. While stability operations, pacification missions, and small wars earn few devoted followers, these missions form a large part of US military history and likely future. Military leaders that can recognize and address the conditions that cause instability are more likely to design an effective solution for those causes. Military leaders that can recognize changes in the environment and react to meet emerging challenges are more likely to be successful in the operation. The three case studies demonstrate that it is very difficult to identify and address the root causes of instability, but military and political leaders that are able to remain flexible and adjust their plans to meet the emerging challenges of the environment can still be successful.

The three case studies shared many similarities. All three nations were geographically isolated and did not receive any significant external support during the occupations. In all three cases, the established central government had failed. In each case, inadequate economic systems did not allow the central government to provide for the needs of the population. However, the differences, more than the similarities, inform why a generic approach to stability operations is not responsive enough to succeed.

In the Philippines, the Moro population did not identify with the Filipino government and had a long history of conflict with the Filipinos. The US occupation threatened Moro culture and met with widespread resistance. Several officers identified challenges with integrating the Moros with the rest of

the Philippines. However, US actions following the Philippine War soon placed the Moros at odds with the Army. In response, military leaders varied their response to the emerging Moro threat. In the case of Leonard Wood, the Army failed to pacify the Moros, but made some improvements to the infrastructure. During Tasker Bliss' reign, the Army placed security responsibilities on the Filipinos and Moros improving the perception of Philippine government legitimacy. Pershing continued the successful portions of Wood's and Bliss' approach while modifying his approach to meet US political objectives and enable the Philippine government to better integrate the Moro population.

Having fought for independence, the Haitian government was always under attack from warring factions. The oppressive government drove the population to rebellion and poor economic conditions left many without options. The initial US occupation secured key infrastructure, but a long history of oppressive leaders left the population wary of the Marines. Soon the political forces that existed in Haiti before the occupation emerged and used a desperate and fearful population to resist the Marines. Waller misunderstood the nature of the Cacos and focused his effort on the population centers. However, Caco threats forced the Marines to occupy more of the country. The Marines compounded initial missteps by targeting the population. This gave the Caco leaders a large pool of resentful Haitians for new recruits and material support. As the Marines trained and used the Gendarmerie, Marine leaders directed their limited resources against the Cacos. Improvements in infrastructure allowed the Marines and Gendarmerie to communicate and maneuver over large portions of the country. The Marines recognized that the Caco leaders sustained the resistance and designed operations to target each emerging Caco leader. Improvements in the Gendarmerie and infrastructure ensured the Haitian government could confront instability before it grew large enough to threaten the state.

The Dominican Republic had a long history of a weak central government. The Caudillos held the power throughout the country and the population was more loyal to the Caudillos than the central government. The Caudillos had fought the Haitians and European powers to secure the Dominican Republic's independence. Limited infrastructure ensured that the Caudillos, and not the central

government, protected and provided for the population. The US led military government and confrontations between the Marines and Dominicans escalated civil unrest into open revolt. The Marines attributed the revolt to organized criminal activity and focused on securing US interests. Instead of using experience gained in Haiti, the Marines employed the same generic response that failed early in the Haitian occupation. Marine leaders continued to modify their approach, but a complete shift in strategy was necessary to end the conflict. A combination of persistent Marine patrolling, Dominican counter-guerrilla units, and a political settlement stopped the conflict. Improvements in infrastructure and the increased capability in the Dominican central government minimized the importance of the Caudillos. Dominican security forces ensured that the Caudillos were unable to oppose the central government again.

In each case, military leaders had to respond to a changing threat. Identifying and understanding the sources of instability proved to be very difficult for US leadership, but flexible leaders adjusted their plans and took advantage of emerging enemy vulnerabilities.

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